

What if when we died, we were replaced by another person with their own thoughts and our memories? Would they want to be free of us? Tackling the idea of identity and the facade that is appearance, Mount Vernon's production of *A Spare Me* delves into these philosophical questions while questioning what it is to be themselves.

The play was written by A. Rey Pamatmat and first performed for the Waterwell New Works Lab at the Professional Performing Arts School in 2012. Set in the dystopian future of Earth, the human population is in a desolate state, relying on their children to fix the world. Clones called Spares are readily available to replace a child in the event of death. The plot follows an intelligently intrepid student, Win, as she realizes the Spare of her boyfriend, Sel, is no longer the same person she loved before he died. Dodging her overbearing parents and vigilant government, Win sets out to discover the dark secrets and truths behind Spares.

Win (Nicole Duchaine) is unapologetically righteous. Duchaine excels at portraying the girl that is too smart for her own good. Through subtle, yet effective, physicalities and changes in posture and diction throughout Win's arc, Duchaine brings to life the charming character. One of her friends, Two (Karly Sargent) provides the much needed comic relief. Sargent used her larger-than-life poetry and cleverly timed responses when playing the bubbly engineer. Contrasting nicely with Duchaine's subtle characterization, whenever the pair were on stage, laughs were sure to follow.

Dos (Katia E. Ramirez) is a runaway Spare whose parents disowned her. Ramirez delivered a moving performance in every scene she appeared in. Although only featured in the second act,

Ramirez left a last impression through her overwhelming emotions and believable chemistry with her best friend, Cop and her boyfriend, Alawa. Elga (Isabel Pascal) is a Prefect and a role model to other students. Not only does Pascal's stage presence intimidate, but also intrigues, all eyes were drawn to her when she took the stage and for good reason. Demonstrating her excellent acting ability, Pascal softly melts the hard exterior of Elga away to show someone who deeply cares for her friends.

As a whole, the entire cast individualized every character and stayed engaged in the background which made the scenes interesting. This is used especially in the courtyard where younger students were playing games, older students would be doing homework or gossiping and two students could be seen sparring.

Adding to the futuristic background of the show, the technical elements did not fail to amaze. Beautiful coloring of the sky from blue to signify an upload, to the slight flashes during the solar storms showed incredible attention to detail shown by the lighting team (Micco Aniano Daniels). The first thing that can be noticed when walking into the theatre is the multi-functional set (Tania Romero Gonzalez & Hayleigh Wankowski). The minimalistic set will blow you away once you realize how many facets of the set were utilized in different ways over the course of the entire show.

By letting us explore the ideas of identity and individuality, Mount Vernon's production of *A Spare Me* pleads us to stop being who we were and start being who we are.